

Appl. No 09/886,014
Amtd dated October 29, 2004
Reply to Office action of June 3, 2004

Listing of Claims:

1. (currently amended) A method of vending fasteners to retail consumers, comprising the steps of:
 - (a) stocking numerous varieties of fasteners at a retail outlet in selected locations, each of said locations identifiable by visible retail location identifiers;
 - (b) providing consumers with access to a ~~computer programmed with~~ merchandising software, said software having computer program instructions configured to cause a computer to provide a user interface for receiving user input and for displaying icons describing said fasteners and also for displaying the retail location identifiers corresponding to the locations in which said fasteners are stocked; and
 - (c) allowing such consumers public access to said fasteners.
2. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said fasteners are stocked in predetermined containers, readily identifiable by visible container identifiers, and wherein said container identifiers are displayed on said user interface.
3. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein said icons include graphical images of said fasteners.
4. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein said icons, information, and retail location identifiers and container identifiers are presented on pages organized according to fastener varieties, and wherein said user input determines the display of said pages.
5. (original) The method of claim 4, wherein said user interface includes a screen for displaying videos demonstrating the use of at least some of said fasteners.
6. (original) The method of claims 1, 2, 3 or 4, wherein step (b) is carried out at said retail outlet, and wherein said user interface includes a touch screen.

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7. (currently amended) The method of claim 1, wherein step (b) is carried out remote from said retail outlet, and wherein said user interface includes is provided by a personal computer and monitor.

8. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein said software is provided to said consumers on a pre-recorded storage medium.

9. (original) The method of claim 7, wherein said software is provided to said consumers by means of a computer network.

10. (original) The method of claim 9 wherein said software comprises a series of pages capable of being displayed by a network browser.

11. (currently amended) A fastener selection system for selecting a fastener comprising:

- (a) a computer having a user interface for displaying information and for receiving user input;
- (b) a collection of pages capable of being displayed on said user interface, said pages including one or more selection pages and one or more detail pages, wherein some of said selection pages include icons for selecting one or more types of fasteners, and wherein each said detail page includes information describing a selected type of fastener; and
- (c) display software for controlling the display of said pages on said user interface, in response to said user input.

12. (currently amended) The system of claim 11 wherein said information ~~or~~ includes the location of said selected type of fastener in a retail establishment.

13. (original) The system of claim 12 wherein said information includes stock information relating to the availability of said selected type of fastener in said retail establishment.

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14. (original) The system of claim 11 wherein said information includes the location of said selected type of fastener in two or more retail establishments.

15. (original) The system of claim 11 wherein some of said detail pages include a link for displaying real-time information relating to the availability of the associated selected type of fastener.

16. (original) The system of claim 11 wherein said information includes graphical instructions describing appropriate usage of said selected type of fastener.

17. (original) The system of claim 11 wherein said information includes a video demonstrating usage of said selected type of fastener.

18. (currently amended) A method of selecting a fastener suitable for a particular purpose from a collection of numerous varieties of fasteners comprising:

- (a) identifying an application in which a fastener may be used;
- (b) accessing a collection of pages by using a computer, the collection of pages describing various types of fasteners;
- (c) navigating through the collection of pages to identify a particular fastener suitable for the application; and
- (d) choosing an appropriate selecting the particular fastener therefrom.

19. (currently amended) The method of claim 18 wherein step (c) is performed by:

- (i) accessing an overview main page of said collection of pages, wherein said overview main page illustrates two or more types or groups of fasteners;
- (ii) selecting a type or group of fastener suitable for the application;
- (iii) viewing another page of said collection of pages, wherein said other page illustrates additional fasteners within said type or group of fasteners; and

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(iv) ~~repeating steps (ii) and (iii) one or more times; and~~
(iv) viewing a detail page of said collection of pages, wherein said detail page includes information relating to said particular fastener.

20. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said detail page includes information relating to the location of said particular fastener in a retail establishment.

21. (original) The method of claim 19 wherein said detail page includes information relating to the availability of said particular fastener in a retail establishment.

22. (original) The method of claim 21 wherein said information includes real-time stock information about said particular fastener in one or more retail establishments.

23. (original) The method of claim 20 wherein steps (b) and (c) are performed in the retail establishment.

24. (original) The method of claim 20 wherein step (b) and (c) are performed in a location remote from said retail establishment.

25. (original) The method of claim 24 further including the following step:

(e) attending at the location of the particular fastener, obtaining one or more of the particular fastener and purchasing the obtained fasteners.

26. (original) The method of claim 24 wherein steps (b) and (c) are performed using a network browser.

27. (currently amended) A method of locating a particular fastener substantially similar to a sample fastener comprising:

(a) accessing a collection of pages by using a computer, the collection of pages describing various types of fasteners;
(b) navigating through the collection of pages and selecting a type of fastener;

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(c) repeating step (b) one or more times and progressively selecting a type of fastener more closely resembling the sample fastener; and
(e)(d) selecting the particular fastener.

28. (currently amended) The method of claim 27 wherein step (b) is performed by

(i) comparing a characteristic of the sample fastener with a fastener displayed on a page;
(ii) selecting the next page to be displayed based on the results of the comparison in step (i); and
(iii) wherein step (d) comprises selecting the particular fastener when the displayed fastener most closely resembles the sample fastener.

29. (currently amended) The method of claim 28 wherein the following steps are performed before step (ii):

(iv) comparing a second characteristic of the sample fastener with a fastener displayed on a page; and
(v) selecting the next page to be displayed based on ~~the~~ result of the comparison in step (iv).

30. (currently amended) A computer readable medium having stored thereon computer program instructions, which when executed by a computer, cause containing a collection of pages to be capable of being displayed on a user interface of the computer device, said pages including one or more selection pages for selecting a type of fastener from two or more types of fasteners and including one or more detail pages for describing selected types of fasteners, wherein said pages are organized in a tree structure having a selection page at its root node.

31. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 30 wherein each of said selection pages includes one or more icons, each of said icons being associated with

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one or more associated pages, wherein said associated pages may be selection pages or detail pages.

32. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 30 wherein at least one some of the one or more detail pages contains information relating to one type of fastener.

33. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 32 wherein each of said detail pages includes a description of the location of said type of fastener in a retail establishment.

34. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 33 wherein said location is publicly accessible.

35. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 32, wherein said information includes the availability of said type of fastener in one or more retail establishments.

36. (currently amended) The computer readable medium of claim 32 or 35, wherein said at least one some of said detail page includes a link for displaying real time stock information for said type of fastener, wherein said real time stock information is located in a database.

37. (original) The computer readable medium of claim 36 wherein said database is stored on a remote data medium.

38. (new) A method of vending fasteners to retail consumers, comprising the steps of:

(a) stocking numerous varieties of fasteners at a retail outlet in selected locations, each of said locations identifiable by visible retail location identifiers;

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(b) providing at said retail outlet a computer programmed with fastener merchandising software and accessible to said retail consumers, said computer having a user interface for receiving user input from said retail consumers and for displaying images of said fasteners and displaying the retail location identifiers corresponding to the locations in which said fasteners are stocked; and

(c) allowing said retail consumers public access to said fasteners.

39. (new) The method of claim 38, wherein said fasteners are stocked in predetermined containers, readily identifiable by visible container identifiers, and wherein said container identifiers are displayed on said user interface.